

U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY, BACHELOR
OFFICERS' QUARTERS
(U.S.M.A. Building 149)
U.S. Military Academy
West Point
Orange County
New York

HABS NO. NY-5708-59

HABS
NY,
36-WEPO,
1/59-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY - BACHELOR OFFICERS' QUARTERS
(U.S.M.A. Building 149)

HABS No. NY-5708-59

LOCATION: U.S. Military Academy
West Point
Orange County
New York

USGS West Point Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 18.587950.4582061

PRESENT OWNER
AND OCCUPANT: U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.

PRESENT USE: Housing for Officers

SIGNIFICANCE: Quarters no. 149 is one of a number of buildings at West Point designed by Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson (CGF) in a major building campaign begun in 1902. Their approach was a return to an academic Gothic style in order to harmonize with the existing buildings and picturesque setting. Their buildings were typically of gray granite, quarried on site. While the Bachelor's Quarters was built in the Gothic style, it is distinct from the other CGF buildings on Post, because its detailing and massing reflect the adjacent Cullum Hall and Officers' Mess, designed in the Neo-classical style by McKim, Mead & White. Moreover, the Quarters were built of buff brick and cast stone, rather than gray granite, to match the Officers' Mess. Thus, the Bachelor Officers' Quarters has added significance because it exhibits a blending of two distinctly different styles present on Post.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1906-1909
2. Architects: Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.
4. Builders: The contract was initially awarded to Church Construction Company on November 13, 1906. However, this company failed, and the job was taken over by the Empire State Surety Company. Empire had difficulties with its subcontractors and eventually hired the Oscawana Building Company of New York to complete the building. (Annual Reports of the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy, 1907, p. 68, 1909, pps. 61-62.)
5. Original plans and construction: The original plans were drawn by Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, dated 1906 and are located in the USMA Archives.

The construction of the Bachelor Officers' Quarters was initially funded by the Military Academy Appropriation bill, of 1902. The total amount of that bill was \$5,500,000, of which \$100,000 was allotted to Quarters 149. (Annual Report of the Board of Visitors to the United States Military Academy, 13 June 1905, p. 10.) However, three years later, the estimated cost had doubled to \$220,000 and additional funds were appropriated. (Annual Report of the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy, June 1906, p. 18.) Completed in the fall of 1909, the final cost of the building was \$285,382.04. (Annual Report of the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy, Sept. 1, 1911, p. 7.)

6. Alterations and additions: Alterations over the years have included replacement of the windows, new copper roofing, repointing, new flooring, new elevator and improvements related to fire safety and mechanical systems. The Record File Index of the Directorate of Engineering and Housing lists drawings for alterations from 1906 to 1979, some of which were never executed. (See supplementary

material.)

Alterations documented through drawings include new closets in Apt. 28 in 1938, refurbishing of Apt. B-1 in 1942, new ventilating ducts, vent house and sump, and transformer vault in 1944, new kitchenettes in Apt. 33A (1946), Apts. B23, B43 and M11A (1947), new elevator penthouse and hoistway in 1948-1949, new asphalt tile flooring on the 1st basement, second, third and fourth floors in 1956, repair of the parapet wall and roof in 1959, replacement of leaded, diamond-paned windows with aluminum, 1/1, double hung sash in 1964, repointing and masonry repair in 1968, new stairwell enclosures in 1971, installation of a sprinkler system in 1977, and a new copper roof on the south wing in 1979.

Alterations observed on site, but for which no drawings are on file, are the replacement of the original wood doors of the main entrance and alteration of doors at the south entrance by insertion of a single large window panel in each leaf. Painted steel lockers were installed in the main stairhall.

Garages for seven cars were built behind Quarters 149 by 1937, as shown on Drawing no. 2669. However, these were demolished at an unknown date.

B. Historical Context:

Quarters 149 has served as the Bachelor Officers' Quarters from its completion in 1909. For an overview of the historical context of these quarters and the academy, see U.S. Military Academy, HABS No. NY-5708, Volume 2 "West Point: An Overview of the History and Physical Development of the United States Military Academy."

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Quarters 149 is among the numerous commissions executed at West Point by Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson, as part of a major building campaign initiated in 1902. It is an unusual example of their work, however, because it reflects

the typical Tudor Gothic style, yet it blends with the adjacent Neo-classical Cullum Hall and Officers' Mess in massing and color. Apparently a closer match was intended but did not occur, due to a misunderstanding during construction. (J. M. Carson, Major and Quartermaster, letter to Adjutant, Subject Files, USMA Archives.) Although altered by replacement windows and doors, it retains most of its architectural integrity.

2. Condition of fabric: The building is in good condition, with the exception of the cast stone elements on the exterior, some of which show spalling.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: In plan, the building is roughly L-shaped, consisting of two wings linked by a small hyphen containing an entrance foyer. The overall dimensions of the south wing are 121' long x 50' wide. The entrance hyphen is 10' wide and 11' deep, and the north wing is 89'-2" long. A square stair tower, 28' x 28', anchors the southwest corner of the north wing, projecting 7'-6" from the south wall.
2. Foundations: The foundations consist of poured concrete footings.
3. Walls: The walls are predominantly of brick, laid in common bond, with cast stone belt coursing, window sills and lintels, above a two-story basement with slightly battered walls of rusticated random ashlar. The walls are embellished with projecting stone shields. Cast stone buttresses flank the entrances.
4. Structural systems: The building is constructed of load-bearing brick and stone masonry walls with reinforced concrete floor framing. The roof is framed with 8-panel steel Pratt trusses.
5. Balconies: Plain wrought iron balconies are located in recessed bays at the first basement level of the side and rear elevations of the north wing.
6. Chimneys: There are six brick chimneys at the roof of the south wing and four at the north wing.

7. Openings

- a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance is at the first floor of the west elevation. A second major entrance is at the south end of the south wing. Both have Gothic arched cast stone surrounds and are flanked by buttresses. The original double wood doors with bronze straps still exist at the south doorway, although window panels have been installed. The doors of the main entrance have been replaced with straight double wood doors and a wood transom panel above.
- b. Windows: In the upper floors, replacement windows with 1/1 aluminum double hung sash are alternately single and paired within recessed openings with cast stone lintels and sills linked by belt coursing. In the stone basement, the windows are narrow. Originally there were diamond-paned leaded windows in the stair tower, 10-light casement windows in the south wing and 6/6 double-hung sash in the north wing.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof of the south wing is hipped and covered with copper with batten joints. The roof of the north wing is flat and covered with built-up roofing.
- b. Parapet: The north wing has a flat parapet except for shallow pediments above the projecting bays. The parapet of the tower is crenellated by buttresses defined at the top by arched niches. The coping is cast stone.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers:

A square tower, enclosing the main stair, rises 4-1/2 stories at the southwest corner of the north wing, just to the north of the main entrance. It provides a dramatic focal point to the main elevation. Its parapet is articulated by modified buttress motifs.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: The building is basically L-shaped in plan with two wings joined at right angles by an

approximately square entrance hyphen. First floor: both wings are divided by central corridors. In the south wing, there are three apartments on each side of the corridor, or six per floor, while in the north wing, there are two apartments are each side, or four per floor. Each apartment consists of an entrance hall, parlor, bedroom, kitchen and bath. Second and Third Floors, First and Second Basements: identical to the first floor, with the exception of the second basement of the north wing, which is unfinished space devoted to mechanical equipment and storage.

2. Stairways: The principal stairway is located in the tower, and appears to be unaltered. A half-turn stair with two landings per floor, it has cast iron risers and stringers and slate treads. The landings are paved with quarry tile at the first floor and slate at the other floors. The balustrade has heavily carved chestnut strapwork. A second stairway is located in the south wing. A dog-leg stair, it has cast-iron newells, risers, stringers and railings, and slate treads.
3. Flooring: The original floors in the hallways throughout the building are quarry tile with slate borders. However, on all floors except the first, they have been covered with asphalt tile or linoleum. Within the apartments, the floors are hard pine.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls and ceilings are painted plaster. The wall trim consists of a pine baseboard, cornice mold and wainscotting giving a half-timber effect through the use of wood stiles and wood rail.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The entrance doorways and those in the hall have cast stone surrounds with Tudor arches decorated with blocks of foliage. The jambs are defined by cast stone blocks imitating quoins. The main entrance has heavy double wood batten doors with an arched wood transom panel above, all non-original. The double wood batten doors at the south entrance are original and have decorative bronze straps. However, they have been altered with recent acrylic panels. The apartment doorways have

simple wood surrounds and four-panelled wood doors. Doors that enter into the corridor and the halls within the apartments have transoms.

- h. Windows: Window trim of note follows that of the door trim noted above.

6. Decorative features and trim:

First Floor: The stairhall has copious carved chestnut woodwork consisting of exposed panelled ceiling beams, panelling at the walls and columns, built-in benches, and carved balustrade at the stair with elaborate strapwork. The fireplace is the focus of the room, with a cast stone mantel with blocks of foliage, and wood panelled chimney breast above with a diamond-shaped opening where there was once a decorative infill with a foliage motif. The corridors have half-timber wainscoting, baseboard and cornice mold. Within the apartments, the decorative features create a "Craftsman" style effect. The windows and doors have simple flat pine surrounds. Each apartment has a fireplace with a Craftsman style mantel of wood and Mercer tile.

First Basement, Second, Third and Fourth Floors: Finishes in the main stairhall consist of plaster ceilings, plaster walls with half-timber wainscoting, and floors covered with asphalt tile or linoleum. The hallways are similar to the first floor with the exception of the walls, which have a simple chairrail instead of wainscoting. The apartment units are identical to those on the first floor.

Second Basement: Finishes in the south wing consist of plaster ceiling and walls and a concrete floor, scored in squares. In the north wing, the space has a concrete floor and unfinished walls and ceiling.

7. Hardware: Decorative hardware includes original bronze hinges and straps on the exterior doors at the south entrance.
8. Mechanical Equipment:

- a. Heating is by steam radiator.
 - b. Lighting: There are few lighting fixtures of interest in the building. One is an iron and glass lantern hung in the entrance foyer. The apartments have brass wall sconces. The drawings indicate that there were wall sconces in the main stairhall, but these were removed. Lighting in the corridors is provided by recent fluorescent fixtures.
 - c. Plumbing: While Apts. 11 through 23 were refurbished with new bathrooms in 1955, the other units retain their original fixtures including bathtubs with ball and claw feet. The majority of the units retain original double sinks.
 - d. Elevators: Drawings dated 1948-1949, indicate the elevator located in the main stairhall was completely replaced at that time.
9. Original furnishings: Original furnishings still remaining consist of built-in benches and bookcases in the parlor, usually flanking the fireplaces, and built-in chests of drawers in the walk-in closets.
- D. Site:
1. General setting and orientation: Quarters 149 faces northwest on Doubleday Field, while the rear overlooks the Hudson. Built into a cliff, there is a 35-foot drop from the front elevation to the rear.
 2. Historic landscape design: Landscape features of the site consist of a stone stepped walkway bordered by a wall on the north side of Quarters 149 which leads down the cliff to the rear of the building.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: Mylar prints of all the drawings are available in the Facilities Engineer's Office in the Directorate of Engineering and Housing, U.S. Military Academy. The original Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson drawings are at the USMA Archives.
- B. Early Views: No early views were located.

C. Bibliography

1. Primary and unpublished sources: Records, U.S. Military Academy Archives.
2. Secondary and published sources: Bethanie C. Grasbof, "Building Analysis and Preservation Guidelines for Category I and Selected Category II Buildings at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York," Historic American Buildings Survey, 1983.

Robie S. Lange, "West Point: an Overview of the History and Physical Development of the United States Military Academy," Historic American Buildings Survey, 1983. HABS No. NY-5708.

Annual Reports, U.S. Military Academy Archives.

Schuyler, Montgomery. "The Works of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson, 1892-1910," Architectural Record, 29 (Jan. 1911), pps. 86-112.

- D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: A more thorough search of the U.S. Military Academy Archives and Special Collections might yield more information. Additional information may also be found at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. and through interviews with individuals familiar with the building.

E. Supplemental Material

Record File Index Sheet, Quarters 149, Facilities Engineer's Office, the Directorate of Engineering and Housing, U.S. Military Academy.

FILE CODE: MA

RECORD FILE INDEX SHEET

FILE NO.	TUBE NO.	DRAWING NO.	DESCRIPTION	
Flat File 6 11			<u>QUARTERS 149</u>	
	1 *	Third Basement and Foundation Plan	1/06	
	1A *	Foundation Plan	1/06	
	2 *	Second Basement Plan	1/06	
	3 *	First Basement Plan	1/06	
	4 *	First Floor Plan	1/06	
	5 *	Second Floor Plan	1/06	
	6 *	Third Floor Plan	1/06	
	7 *	Fourth Floor Plan and Roof Plan	1/06	
	7A *	Framing and Trusses	1/06	
	8 *	West Elevation	1/06	
	9 *	South Elevation and Full Size Window Details	1/06	
	10 *	East Elevation	1/06	
	11 *	North Elevation	1/06	
	12 *	Sections	1/06	
	13 *	Interior Details and Elevations	1/06	
	13A *	Interior Details and Elevations	1/06	
	14 *	Heating Plan	1/06	
	87 *	Location Plan and Topo	3/06	
	2669	Assignment of Officer's Garages	7/37	
	2860	New Closets; Plan and Elevations	7/38	
	2890	Proposed Fire Escape	11/38	
	3038	Fire Rope; Perspective Sketch	11/39	
	3041	Alterations; Floor Plans	11/39	
	3053	Iron Ladders; Sections and Details	1/40	
	3394	Basement Plan	8/42	
	3394A	Basement Plan	8/42	
	3899	Ventilating Ducts, Vent House and Sump; Transformer Vault	10/44	
	4235	Proposed New Kitchenette Third Floor Plan and Elevation	11/46	
	4282	New Fire Doors, Plan	3/47	
	4285	New Kitchenettes, Second and Fourth Floors	3/47	
	4292	Proposed New Kitchenette; First Floor Plan, Elevations	4/47	

FILE CODE: MA

RECORD FILE INDEX SHEET

U.S.M.A. - Bachelor
 Officers' Quarters
 (U.S.M.A. Building 149)
 HABS NO. NY-5708-59
 (page 11)

FILE NO.	TUBE NO.	DRAWING NO.	DESCRIPTION	
Flat File # 11			<u>QUARTERS 149 (Continued)</u>	
		4343 *	Details of New Fire Doors	7/47
		4481	Elevator for Penthouse on Tower Roof; Elevation and Sections	10/48
		5007	Elevator Hoistway, East Apartments; Plan and Section	1/49
		5012 *	Alterations to Elevator Hoistway; East Apartments	1/49
		5119 *	New Fire Tower, South Wing, East Apartments; Floor Plan & Sections	8/49
		5120 *	Details of New Fire Doors, North Wing, East Apartments; Plan, Elev.	8/49
		5121 *	Details of New Fire Doors, North Wing, East Apartments; Plan, Elev.	8/49
		5224 *	Expansion of Laundry Facility at First Basement; Floor Plan	9/50
		5430	New Garages at Rear; Plan and Elevation	11/51.
		5431	New Garages at Rear; Sections and Truss Details	11/51
		5434	New Garages at Rear; Plan and Elevations	12/51
		5435	New Garages at Rear; Details, Sections, Truss Details	12/51
		5748	Fire Exits; Floor Plan	10/53
		5840	Temperature Control Valves for Heating	9/54
		*5876	Rehab of Bathrooms	2/55
		6045	Proposed Fire Escape	8/56
		6077	Installation of New Asphalt Tile; Floor Plan	10/56
		6446 *	Repair Parapet Wall; Roof Plan and Elevation	6/59
		7228 *	Replacement of Windows; Elevation	11/64
		7229 *	Replacement of Windows; Window Details	11/64
		7552	Recaulking of Windows; Elevations	2/68
		7590 *	Repainting; South Elevations	10/68
		7591 *	Repainting; West Elevation	10/68
		7592 *	Repainting; North Elevation	10/68
		7593 *	Repainting; East Elevations	10/68
		7793 *	Stairwell Enclosure Floor Plan	4/71
		7794 *	Stairwell Enclosure Details	4/71
		8420 *	Sprinkler System; North Stairwell, Plan and Riser Diagram	12/77
		8421 *	Sprinkler System; Floor Plan and Stairwell Details and Elevation	12/77
		8555 *	Copper Roofing and Insulation; Roof Plan and Attic Plan	6/79
		No #	East Apartments, North and South Wing	No Date
		No #	Second Basement Plan	No Date
	No #	Details and Elevations	No Date	

